

West Nile Virus

What You Need To Know



What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a viral infection that can be spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. The mosquito contracts the virus from an infected bird.

Has West Nile Virus been found in New Hampshire?

Yes, West Nile Virus has been found in mosquitoes, birds and horses in our state. Around the country WNV has been shown to infect a variety of birds, especially crows and bluejays, as well as other animals. New Hampshire participates in a national effort to collect information that allows us to better understand the epidemic and how it spreads. It also helps us identify different strategies to decrease the risk to people.

How will I know if I have contracted WNV infection?

Most people who become infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, while others may have mild illness such as fever, headache and body aches. In some people, particularly the elderly, WNV can cause serious illness that affects the brain tissue (a.k.a. encephalitis). At its most serious, the disease can cause permanent neurological damage and can be fatal. Symptoms of encephalitis include the rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, confusion, loss of consciousness and muscle weakness.

For More Information

NH Department of Health & Human Services
866-273-NILE (6453)
www.dhhs.state.nh.us

How To Protect Yourself

Get rid of standing water.

Mosquitoes will breed in any puddle that last more than 4 days!

- ▲ Remove old tires from your property.
- ▲ Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or other containers. Don't overlook containers that have become overgrown by aquatic vegetation.
- ▲ Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outside.
- ▲ Ensure roof gutters are clean and draining properly.
- ▲ Clean and chlorinate swimming pools and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered.
- ▲ Drain water from pool covers.
- ▲ Aerate garden ponds or stock them with fish.
- ▲ Turn over wheelbarrows and change water in bird baths at least twice weekly.
- ▲ Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.
- ▲ Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their properties.

Be aware of where mosquitoes live and breed, and keep them from entering your home.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Weeds, tall grass and bushes provide an outdoor home for the adult *Culex pipiens* mosquito, which is commonly associated with West Nile virus.

Mosquitoes can enter homes through unscreened windows or doors, or broken screens. Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace all screens in your home that have tears or holes.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites.

If outside during evening, nighttime and dawn hours when mosquitoes are most active and likely to bite, children and adults should wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks.

Consider the use of an insect repellent containing 10% or less DEET (N, N-diethyl-methyl-meta-toluamide) for children, and no more than 30% DEET for adults. Use DEET according to the manufacturer's directions.

Children should not apply DEET to themselves. Since repellents may irritate the eyes and mouth, avoid applying repellent to the hands of children.

Vitamin B, ultrasonic devices, incense and bug zappers have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.